

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH AND  
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JANUARY 22, 2008

Last April the Board of Supervisors directed staff to solicit input from the environmental community, grocer/retailers organizations, and other interested stakeholders concerning the issue of polyethylene plastic bag consumption in the County. For several months staff has coordinated meetings of a "County Recycling Workgroup" to formulate recommendations to the Board. The Workgroup discussed several options, resulting in a recommendation supporting "Alternative 5".

Although Alternative 5 addresses many compromises among stakeholders, additional modifications are required to strike a balance amongst competing interests. As proposed by staff, some of the provisions in Alternative 5 may be difficult to implement, thereby undermining the overall effectiveness of the program. It is imperative that the County garner the support and cooperation of those most impacted by this program, which is the grocer/retailers who must administer its provisions. Grocer/retailers have expressed a concern about their ability to meet the specified reductions in Alternative 5 within the identified target dates. This challenge is particularly difficult for smaller retailers who may not enjoy the benefits of economies of scale of larger grocer/retailers, and who may also have lower profit margins. Separately, the environmental community is concerned about the so-called "forgiveness rate" being too high, as it may discourage efforts to reach target reduction goals. Lastly, changing the target date for completion of a draft ordinance banning plastic bags will allow more time for staff to complete the required California Environmental Quality Act clearance and provide more time for voluntary compliance to succeed.

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WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the CEO, working with the Director of Public Works and County Counsel, to prepare an ordinance for the Board consistent with the staff recommendations in Alternative 5, and incorporate the following revisions:

- Reduce the benchmarks in Alternative by 5% (2010 benchmark reduced from 35% to 30% and 2013 benchmark from 70% to 65%);
- With respect to the one-year extension if benchmarks are not achieved, reduce "forgiveness" rate from 5% to 3%;
- Change the completion date of a draft ordinance banning plastic bags from April 1, 2009 to April 1, 2010, with an understanding that staff will initiate and complete the required California Environmental Quality Act review in advance of the 2010 target date; and
- Direct staff to provide quarterly progress reports to the Board of Supervisors and interested stakeholders.

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plasticbags